

From: [Scott Couch](#)
To: [REDACTED]
CC: [Billington, Tracie; Jeffrey Albrecht; Shahla Farahnak;](#)
Subject: Re: Monte Rio Sewer Project/Prop 50 IRWM Draft Funding
Date: Friday, December 08, 2006 4:58:55 PM
Attachments:

Thank you for your comments. They will be taken into consideration.

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>>> "Victoria Wikle" [REDACTED] 12/8/2006 3:47 PM >>>
Thank you for giving me an opportunity to comment. I am opposed to spending Prop 50 public funds for the Proposed Monte Rio Sewer project.

Proposed Monte Rio Sewer

There is a proposal to build a controversial sewage treatment facility to serve parts of Monte Rio. Even though the entire community would be affected by the sewer only those in the proposed sewer district were allowed to vote.

Along with most others in the surrounding community I object to the current proposed Monte Rio Sewer Plant for the following reasons:

Flawed voting

The 218 election allowed parcel owners in the proposed district to vote based on an assigned number of equivalent single-family dwelling (ESD) units. These units were to be used for voting and tax assessments. The problem arose when certain parcels were given a large number of units for

voting purposes but then were able to apply for and receive a later reduction in the number of units for purposes of payment. The ability to vote one way and pay another resulted in many business owners having more power for voting purposes than they will be required to pay. Single family homeowners with one ESD were not included in this deal. So the business owners who stand to gain the most financially from the sewer, had a vote weighted in their favor, but will not be required to pay their fair share.

False premise

The county said the sewage treatment plant was needed because the septic systems were polluting the river, yet no evidence has ever been made public that supports this allegation and there is persuasive evidence to the contrary.

Creates blight

The proposed plant will be in a building ostensibly designed to look like a barn, however it will be elevated because the location floods and it will be a mere 10 feet from the scenic Highway 116. The treatment facility will be surrounded by a security fence that will block access to one of the last remaining undeveloped beaches on the lower Russian River. This beach would far better serve the public as an addition to parkland.

Poor Plant Location

The plant is located in an area that floods on a regular basis. The plant is also located out of the sewer district creating a problem for the neighboring community. This is not a good neighbor policy.

Eminent domain

The property will need to be obtained using eminent domain because the family that owns the property objects to the beautiful river beach becoming a sewer plant. Their historic-family-ranch-home overlooks the beach.

High capital cost

The proposed system is not a cost effective solution to a few failing septic systems. The cost has continue to rise and is now at about \$17 million to serve less than 400 occupied parcels. With the additional costs to be born by the parcel owners for septic tank decommissioning and hookup to the system, the cost per parcel is now about \$50,000. Many onsite septic systems could be repaired or replaced for less.

High ongoing costs

Even with the loans and grants that the county hopes to obtain, the system will cost more to operate than most systems in the county at over \$1000 per year in an area that has the lowest incomes in the county. The cost estimates have been revised several times and the cost keeps rising. No one knows the ultimate cost that these low income people will be expected to pay. Many say they will need to leave the area if the sewer goes through.

Poor design

The proposed design is like the upstream Russian River Sanitation District's plant design, over-engineered, not environmentally sensitive, and an old fashioned design, not approved by the EPA. In addition, the proposed system includes grinder pumps and storage tanks for raw sewage that depend on electricity to function. This design will result in a nightmare for the community during power outages. The design does not take advantage of the well-documented and tested smaller systems that use our local redwood forests to assist in processing the effluent. And although there are known problematic septic systems due to soil conditions on nearby Starett Hill, these parcels were not included in the service area.

Unsuitable growth

This plant is growth inducing because the sewer district includes more than 200 unbuildable tiny parcels that eventually will become buildable. Due to the anticipated build-out, a relatively huge amount of traffic will be

generated in our community with limited roads. Estimates say that each residence generates 2.5 vehicle trips per day, including deliveries, service and repair trips, meter readers, school buses, emergency calls, shopping, plus commutes, etc. Because of our river valley geography there is no place to expand the road system. What will 500 more vehicle trips per day do our traffic?

Better alternatives.

The community can look to better solutions for the few septic problems that exist. We understand many of the septic systems could be upgraded and the EPA has several sewage treatment system designs that would be much more cost effective and environmentally sensitive to our area's needs. The Monte Rio downtown area could build a less-expensive and more environmentally sound system for their needs.

I sincerely hope that you will take into account the best interests our small community.

Victoria Wikle

